



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICE

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To: Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Chair
Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Jon W. Fullinwider
Chief Information Officer

Subject: **COUNTY STANDARD FOR WEB SITE AND E-MAIL DOMAIN NAMES**

In response to Supervisor Burke's August 19, 2003 motion, instructing this office, the Chief Administrative Office and the Internal Services Department to report to the Board on a common County domain for the County's web site and e-mail.

The standard County domain names are as follows:

- County Web Site: lacounty.info
- E-mail: dept.co.la.ca.us

County Web Site

The designation of "lacounty.info" was adopted when the ".info" designation became available. Before selecting ".info," we investigated the possibility of several other domain designations that were available to the County.

One option included the ".gov" designation. This option was not available unless we prefaced it with the State designation (i.e., lacounty.ca.gov). We made several attempts at various levels within the State organization to come to an agreement on this matter, with no agreed upon conclusion.

Secondly, we attempted to obtain an ".org" designation. However, we could not identify a domain name reflective of Los Angeles County that was not already registered by other entities. We contacted a couple of the entities holding legal title to such registered domain names, and in all cases they wanted a significant amount of money to transfer ownership to the County.

Thus, in order to meet our objective to simplify the domain name, we adopted "lacounty.info". In addition to its simplicity, this domain name establishes an easily identifiable affinity to the County.

It is important to delineate between the County's web page domain name (lacounty.info) and department web page domain names. In this context, all department web sites are accessible from the County's web page via hot links to their respective web pages. This approach allows County departments to establish their own unique domain names without confusing the public with a difficult navigation process. For example, the public can access the Department of Public Works' web site from several locations on the County's main portal page. If they are aware of the unique DPW domain name (ladpw.org), they can access the site directly or bookmark it within their browser for later use.

Where the public may become confused is in the area of displaying the County's domain name on printed material. In this context, we recommend that all material printed for external distribution to the public or internal distribution to County employees contain a reference to the County's web page at "lacounty.info." If the department wants to highlight its unique domain name, the department must also display the County's domain name, and in all instances, the County domain name must be displayed first. The Board should take formal action to mandate the above recommendations.

County E-mail

In regards to County e-mail, with the exception of a few departments, the standard for e-mail addressing is employee first initial, last name "@" dept.co.la.ca.us (example: wsmith@bos.co.la.ca.us).

The key to this standard is the focus on a standardized e-mail format essential to establishing a common/usable directory. While the use of a first initial and last name is understandable, it becomes somewhat difficult to delineate when there are a number of common surnames (i.e., Smith, Garcia, etc.). To mitigate these instances and provide some degree of delineation, the e-mail standard was modified to add a department identifier, which helped in identifying the appropriate individual in a smaller e-mail list, assuming the department name is known.

The use of "co.la.ca.us" is based on a national standard used by the majority of local governments in the nation. The "co" stands for "County", the "la" represents the county's name (i.e., Los Angeles), the "ca" designates the state (i.e., California), and lastly, the "us" denotes the country (i.e., United States). While moving to another standard is possible, it is not recommended due to the wide proliferation/use of the current e-mail standard in the daily operation of the County.

As noted above, a few of the departments (i.e., Fire, Library, Sheriff,) have adopted a different standard and will have to migrate to the County standard. This migration can occur over time by allowing the departments to use their current standard as an alias while converting. The adoption of a standard e-mail format is essential if the County is to have a common/reliable e-mail directory.

To implement these standards, it is recommended that your Board adopt the following:

1. All *publications* for external distribution to the public or internal distribution to County employees, will contain a reference to the County's web page at "lacounty.info." If the department highlights its unique domain name, the department must also display the County's domain name, and in all instances, the County domain name must be displayed first.
2. County e-mail addresses shall conform to the following format: employee first initial, last name "@ dept.co.la.ca.us (example: wsmith@bos.co.la.ca.us).

If you have any questions related to this recommendation, please contact me at (213) 974-2008.

JWF:ygd

c: Chief Administrative Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Chair, Information Systems Commission
Interim Director, Internal Services Department